[COMMITTEE PRINT]

98TH CONGRESS
2d Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SOUTH FLORIDA NARCOTICS LAW ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE SURVEY

A REPORT

OF THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS ABUSE AND CONTROL

NINETY-EIGHTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

SCNAC-98-2-3

Printed for the use of the
Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

39-825 O

WASHINGTON : 1984

H962-9

SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS ABUSE AND CONTROL

CHARLES B. RANGEL, New York, *Chairman*

PETER W. RODINO, JR., New Jersey
FORTNEY H. (PETE) STARK, California
JAMES H. SCHEUER, New York
CARDISS COLLINS, Illinois
DANIEL K. AKAKA, Hawaii
FRANK J. GUARINI, New Jersey
ROBERT T. MATSUI, California
DANTE B. FASCELL, Florida
WALTER E. FAUNTROY, District of Columbia
WILLIAM J. HUGHES, New Jersey
SAM B. HALL, JR., Texas
MEL LEVINE, California
SOLOMON P. ORTIZ, Texas
LAWRENCE J. SMITH, Florida
EDOLPHUS "ED" TOWNS, New York

BENJAMIN A. GILMAN, New York
LAWRENCE COUGHLIN, Pennsylvania
E. CLAY SHAW, JR., Florida
MICHAEL G. OXLEY, Ohio
JOEL PRITCHARD, Washington
STAN PARRIS, Virginia
GENE CHAPPIE, California
DUNCAN HUNTER, California
TOM LEWIS, Florida

COMMITTEE STAFF

JOHN T. CUSACK, *Chief of Staff*
RICHARD B. LOWE III, *Chief Counsel*
ELLIOTT A. BROWN, *Minority Staff Director*

Introduction

The Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control prepared a survey, the results of which provided background material for the attendees of the South Florida Narcotics Law Enforcement Conference to be held in West Palm Beach on May 14, 1984. The survey questionnaire was sent to 100 South Florida law enforcement agencies who were asked to evaluate Federal cooperation and assistance with respect to a variety of drug law enforcement objectives. They also were asked to identify needs for improved assistance both from and to Federal agencies.

The relevance of Federal drug law enforcement objectives to their own agency objectives was explored, and the respondents were asked to evaluate the impact of Federal and State cooperative efforts as well as their own solo drug law enforcement operations.

The survey also solicited the respondents' recommendations for improving drug law enforcement policies and strategies.

Forty-two (42) of the 100 agencies solicited returned completed questionnaire forms. This report summarizes the responses received.

Assessment of Cooperation Received

The first group of questions asked the respondents to evaluate the cooperation and assistance received from the Federal South Florida Task Force on Crime, State and intrastate narcotics groups, and seven Federal agencies that are involved in drug law enforcement. They were asked to evaluate each agency with respect to six functions.

An index of cooperation was derived from the number of favorable and unfavorable responses. A score of 100 would represent only favorable responses, and a score of 0 would represent only unfavorable ones. The following tables provide the indices for each agency and for each of the six functions.

Index of agency cooperativeness

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms	79
U.S. Coast Guard	77
U.S. Customs Service	71
Federal Bureau of Investigation	68
State and Intrastate Narcotics Groups	67
Drug Enforcement Administration	65
Internal Revenue Service	62
Immigration and Naturalization Service	53
Federal South Florida Task Force	24

BATF was rated highest in overall cooperativeness, with the Coast Guard a close second. On the other hand the Federal South Florida Task Force was rated clear and away the least cooperative.

ASSESSMENT OF COOPERATION BY FUNCTION

	All Federal agencies	State and intrastate agencies
Exchange of intelligence/information	61	70
Joint operations	53	63
Technical assistance availability	68	79
Training availability	66	65
Equipment availability	64	62
Tactical/operational support	64	92
Overall average	63	72

Overall cooperation with State and intrastate agencies is markedly superior to that available from Federal sources. Federal Cooperation falls behind in the areas of tactical and operational support, joint operations, exchange of intelligence/information and technical assistance availability. Federal and State/intrastate cooperation in making training and equipment available appear to be at the same level.

KINDS OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED

The need for information sharing and better communication between Federal and Florida agencies was overwhelmingly cited by the respondents.

	Number of requests
Information/communications	19
Funding and/or buy money	8
Equipment	6
Investigative or technical assistance	5
Training	4
Regular liaison	3
Manpower (unspecified)	3
Spanish speakers for wire surveillance	1
Storage/control of seized assets	1
Sharing of seized assets	1
Coordination of tactical and strategic efforts	1

Fourteen of the respondents who state that they received Federal assistance, stated that it needed improvement. The needs for such improvement included:

Better liaison/information exchange/intelligence; involvement of local area/people—regular intelligence-liaison meetings on a regional basis.

Increased funding and training.

Greater availability of specialized equipment.—Establishment of an equipment pool from which local agencies could borrow.

Federals should involve/use local agencies in joint operations where local jurisdictions are involved or affected.

Federals should share seized assets obtained in joint operations.

Larger agencies (PDs) get all the attention. Pay more attention to smaller departments.

Availability of State Local Assistance to Federal Efforts

The respondents were asked what kind of assistance they were prepared to offer the Federal effort. Twenty-nine respondents offered to share localized and other specialized intelligence with Federal agencies, six offered some sort of manpower assistance, four offered "cooperation and assistance." Also there were offers of logistic support, locally owned equipment, providing arrest backups, and conduct of vehicular traffic checks. When asked if such assistance had been offered and accepted, the respondents replied as follows:

Has such assistance or cooperation been:

Offered?	Yes 33	No 7
Accepted?	Yes 28	No 8
Utilized?	Yes 21	No 11
Have you received appropriate feedback from the using agency?	Yes 16	No 20

Comments to this question suggest that when assistance is offered and accepted, the lack of feedback from the using agency becomes a major irritant.

Importance of Law Enforcement Objectives

Five types of drug law enforcement objectives were presented to the respondents, and they were asked to assess them in terms of importance to their agency. The results are listed below, on a scale of 1 to 5, with five being most important.

Interdiction of drug smuggling	3.5
Penetration, apprehension/prosecution of drug trafficking organizations	3.2
Apprehension of "street peddlers"	3.4
Reduction/elimination of drug related violent crimes	3.1
Investigation/elimination of money laundering	1.7

These results suggest all objectives except elimination of money laundering have roughly equal priority. As the following table shows, there is overwhelming agreement that the street peddlers should be handled locally, but nearly a third of the respondents would agree that it could be handled on a Federal/State/local joint effort. There is a strong feeling that all the other objectives also should be targeted on a joint operations basis.

WHO SHOULD HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY?

[Horizontal rows total 100 percent]

	State or local	Federal operation	Joint Fed/ State local operation
Interdiction of drug smuggling	0	24	76
Penetration, apprehension/prosecution of drug trafficking organizations	3	5	92
Apprehension/prosecution of "street peddlers"	77	0	23
Reduction/elimination of drug-related violent crimes	53	0	47
Investigation/elimination of money laundering	0	33	67

Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Efforts

Respondents were then asked to give their impression of the impact of law enforcement efforts to date upon each of the listed objectives. Responses were scored: Major improvement, +2; Minor improvement, +1; No impact, 0; and Worse, −1. The average scored by objective and by type of operation follow:

Objective:	*Average score*
Interdiction of drug smuggling	0.45
Penetration, apprehension of drug trafficking organizations	.44
Apprehension/prosecution of street peddlers	.41
Reduction/elimination of drug related violent crime	.31
Money laundering investigation	−.20
Type of operation:	
Agency operating solo	.54
Cooperative with other State and local agencies	.46
Federal South Florida Task Force operations	.11
Non-task force Federal Assistance	.35

These figures suggest that the law enforcement efforts are having little effect. The smuggling interdiction, penetration of trafficking organizations and arrest of street peddlers have about the same impact, positive, but less than a "minor improvement." There has been little, if any, impact on drug related violent crimes, and any perceived impact on money laundering has tended to be negative.

The greatest degree of success has been with the agencies operating solo, and to lesser extent in cooperation with other State and local agencies. Cooperation with Federal agencies has had a minor impact, but the Federal South Florida Task Force operations are perceived as having no impact on the ability of local law enforcement agencies to reach their drug law enforcement objectives.

Policy—Strategy Recommendations

The respondents were then asked if they felt that it would be advantageous to have a single official to coordinate all Federal drug law enforcement activities. Half of the 40 who responded to this question said yes. When asked if a single State official should coordinate all State drug law enforcement activities, 57 percent agreed that it would be a good idea.

The respondents also were asked to rank their priorities for State and Federal approaches to the drug law enforcement problem. The following tables list the highest and lowest ranking priorities for the Florida and the Federal governments. The number in parenthesis after each item is the number of respondents who chose it as highest (left column) or lowest (right column) priority.

Priority Ratings for the Florida State Government

Highest priorities (Rank 1 or 2)	Lowest priorities (Rank 7, 8 or N/A)
More/better interagency intelligence/information between Florida law enforcement agencies (16).	More Florida National Guard Support (30)
Funding for more law enforcement personnel (15).	Additional prevention/treatment funding (15)
Funding for technical support (13)	Centralized Florida narcotic law enforcement authority (10)

Priority Ratings for the Federal Government

Highest priorities	Lowest priorities
Improve intelligence/information exchange with State and local agencies (23)	Assure funding for more Federal prosecutors and judges to prosecute narcotics cases (11)
Federal training for State & local police and prosecutors on narcotics law enforcement and prosecution (13)	Central coordination of all Federal/State/local narcotics law enforcement (7)
Central coordination of all Federal/State/local narcotics law enforcement (12)	More "Operation Everglades" type of operations (7)
Technical support or personnel resource availability to State and local programs (12)	Technical support or personnel resource availability to State and local programs (5)
Assure higher prosecution priorities for narcotics and narcotic-related violations (11)	

It is quite clear that the greatest expressed need is for more or better communications and intelligence, not only between Federal and State/local agencies, but between the State and local agencies themselves. There is a feeling that the State ought to provide more funding for law enforcement personnel and for technical support. There seems to be little support for the utilization of the Florida National Guard to assist in drug law enforcement.

The Federal government is asked to provide training, technical support and personnel resources to the respondents.

There appear to be a number of ambiguities in the above priority ratings. There is a wish for high prosecution priorities for narcotic and narcotic related crimes, but funding for prosecutors and judges to prosecute those cases is given the lowest priority. Although 57 percent of the respondents to a previous question endorsed the idea of a centralized Florida narcotic law enforcement authority, that option had one of the three lowest priorities for the State government. Similarly, central coordination of all Federal, State and local narcotics law enforcement received one of the highest ranking priorities (12 votes) and one of the lowest ranking priorities (7 votes). Another option that ranked in both the highest and lowest priority lists was the provision of Federal technical support or personnel resources to State and local programs.

Although one of the times with the lowest State priorities was for additional funding for prevention and treatment, only one of the respondents rates drug abuse programs as being of no use. Nine others rated prevention programs as "somewhat useful," and the remaining 32 felt them to be "very useful."

About the same degree of usefulness was expressed for citizen watch programs: 32 very useful, and 10 somewhat useful.

Resource Availability

PERSONNEL

When asked if their agency has on board sufficient enforcement personnel to effectively meet its drug law enforcement responsibilities, 64 percent said they need more personnel, and another 12 percent stated they had barely sufficient personnel. 12 percent had sufficient, or more than an adequate number of personnel aboard.

FUNDING

When asked if their operating budget was sufficient for meeting their drug law enforcement responsibilities, 50 percent said their funding was insufficient, 24 percent had barely sufficient funding, and the remaining 26 percent had adequate or more than adequate funding.

When asked to describe the allocation of funding to their agencies for drug law enforcement, two said there were too many strings attached to Federal funds, and four said the same for funds from State sources. Two felt there were guidelines, but no restrictions for Federal fund expenditures, and one felt the same way about State source funds. No agency checked "No Restrictions" for either Federal or State source funding. Interestingly enough 38 of the 42 agencies indicated they had no Federally provided funds the past year, and 39 said they had no State source funding during the same time.

SUMMARY

Some of the more important conclusions that may be reached as a result of the survey are that most of the law enforcement officials who responded believe that:

The Federal South Florida Task Force is considerably less cooperative with them than are the individual Federal law enforcement agencies and State and intrastate narcotics enforcement groups.

South Florida law enforcement agencies feel most a need for improved cooperation and assistance in intelligence and information sharing. In turn, they believe that they have valuable information and intelligence of a localized or specialized nature that Federal agencies could make better use of.

Although some Federal agencies accept State and local information and intelligence, as well as other types of cooperation and assistance, the lack of feedback from Federal sources is a major irritant to the Florida agencies.

The respondents believe that the South Florida Task Force has had little, if any, positive impact for the attainment of their drug law enforcement objectives. The impact of individual Federal agency cooperation and assistance, as well as that from State and local agencies has had somewhat of a positive effect; but agencies acting alone seem to have the most impact, albeit still on a rather low level.

Florida priorities should be placed upon improvement of interagency intelligence and information communication, improved funding for law enforcement personnel, and technical support. There was a high level of agreement that use of the Florida National Guard for drug law enforcement support should be a very low priority.

Federal priorities should be to improve intelligence and information communication with State and local agencies; training State and local police and prosecutors in drug law enforcement and prosecution; technical and personnel support to State and local agencies; and increased priority for narcotic and narcotic-related prosecution.

Most agencies agree that they have insufficient budget and personnel to properly carry out their drug law enforcement responsibilities.

○